

## BAJA 1000: Hengeveld/Childress/Cody, McMillin/R. Gordon Score Wins

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Records continue to fall as early champions Steve Hengeveld/Mike Childress/Quinn Cody, Andy McMillin/Gordon, Herbst/Roeseler begin their victory celebrations as a race record field of 431 starters continues it's desert racing journey down Mexico's rugged Baja California peninsula in the 39th Tecate SCORE Baja 1000 desert race.

With the early finishers arriving in La Paz in the early morning hours Friday, the world's best desert racers who from 38 U.S. States and 12 countries have until 9:30 a.m. (PST) Saturday to become official finishers in the granddaddy of all desert racers. The race is the season finale of the 2006 SCORE Desert Series, the world's foremost desert racing series.

Giving Honda its 10th consecutive victory in this desert racing classic, Hengeveld, Oak Hills, Calif., also earned his sixth overall victory and extended his current win streak to five in leading his talented team to a convincing victory of over two hours in the overall motorcycle race on a Honda XR650R in Class 22. Splitting the riding time with Hengeveld starting the race early Friday morning in Ensenada, the trio charged through the rugged 1,047.8-mile course in 18 hours, 17 minutes, 50 seconds, reaching the finish line at 12:55 a.m. Friday. Hengeveld, Childress, Wrightwood, Calif., and Cody, Santa Barbara, Calif., averaged 54.41 miles per hour over the rugged Baja race course. It was also race-record 17 overall motorcycle win for Honda.



NASCAR's Robby Gordon scored his family's sixth overall Baja win. (LAT photo)

Finishing as the fastest overall 4-wheel vehicle was the blended racing team of two the legendary families of the sports as driver of record Andy McMillin, Poway, Calif. and team owner [Robby Gordon](#), Charlotte, N.C. pulled off a SCORE Trophy-Truck winning run of 19:15:27 in the Red Bull Chevy CK1500.

Winning the unlimited Class 1 for an amazing third straight year, but just missing their third consecutive overall win, Las Vegas' Troy Herbst and Larry Roeseler, Hesperia, Calif., were the second overall 4-wheel finishers with a class-winning time of 19:56:22 in the Terrible Herbst Motorsports Ford-powered Smithbuilt desert race car. In earning a SCORE record 21st race win since 1997, Herbst also clinched a SCORE record seventh Class 1 season point championship and a record fourth SCORE Overall point championship.

Roeseler's 15th class win in the Tecate SCORE Baja 1000 moved him up to a tie for second on the all-time class win list in this race.

"We didn't come here to get second, we came here to win and that's what we did tonight, said the soft-spoken Hengeveld, who lets his driving speak volumes. I didn't have any problems I just kept riding and I don't think they had any problems either. The new sections were really hard but that's what Baja is about. It's not supposed to be easy, it's supposed to be technical and that's what we had here today. We all had our tough sections and it's just a really good, tough course. This is my fifth SCORE Baja 1000 in a row and we made history tonight so I want to thank my other two riders Quinn Cody and Mike Childress. It takes a team to do this and we did it tonight."

"All the Mexican people, thanks for cheering us on, letting us race here, and really supporting us. We look forward to seeing you out on the track. This is the best race in the world! We have a good team, we worked really hard. We made history tonight to win the first SCORE Baja 1000 for the Honda CRF450x and for breaking Johnny Campbell's win-streak and continuing mine with five in a row. I got on the bike at mile 700 and the bike still ran flawlessly, like it's brand new to the finish line.

Finishing third overall among 4-wheel vehicles and second in the featured SCORE Trophy-Truck division was Las Vegas' B.J. Baldwin, who clinched his first SCORE season point championship in his [Chevy Silverado](#). With brief driving relief from Las Vegas' Tommy Bradley Jr., Baldwin covered the course in 20:01:25.

Ron Whitton, Maricopa, Ariz., drove his Ford F-150 to a surprising fourth overall and third in SCORE Trophy-Truck with a time of 20:39:49.

Brothers Gary and Mark Weyhrich of Troutdale, Ore., and B.J. Baldwin of Las Vegas battled to second in Class 1 and fifth overall in 20:44:56 while sixth overall and fourth in SCORE Trophy-Truck was the team of Las Vegas' Brian Collins and Larry Ragland, Cave Creek, Ariz., with a time of 21:07:51 in the Collins Motorsports [Chevy Silverado](#).

"No problems all day – not a single mishap all day. No flat tires, nothing. It was a perfect day. Robby gave me the lead first, physically and I just had to drive it," said McMillin, a third generation desert racer whose family now has 13 class wins and six overalls in this race. "Mark Post was behind us and he was only four minutes behind us and I guess he got stuck in that section up before Loreto, so we had like 15 or 20 minutes on them by the time we hit the highway at mile 850. So we just had to cruise it in."

I definitely think that's what won the race for us is the fact that...I knew Robby could drive the whole 1000 miles, so as far as he could go and how fresh he could be the whole way through, that was going to

be key. So when the course started to get rough, that's where I would get in and that's where I would be a fresh driver and just do my thing. And I think it paid off in the long run, definitely. We finished a lot faster than I thought we would. I thought it would be about 22, 23 hours, definitely. No, I was not expecting to finish in sunlight."

"My grandfather (family patriarch Corky McMillin who died last September) was with me all day in the truck and I asked him to keep me safe and not let me have any problems and he was listening to me. Now everyone in the family helps Daniel (Mark's oldest son). Daniel's next."

"I would much rather win this race than all the others combined. This is the granddaddy of all races - the SCORE Baja 1000 to La Paz! How many people get the chance to witness this...since I was a baby, I've been coming down for pre-runs and stuff! I've been coming to La Paz all my life. I went out on the '95 1000 pre-run, '98 1000 pre-run, SCORE Baja 2000 pre-run, I rode with my dad in '02, then I drove in '04, now here I am in 2006 in the winner's circle! It feels great! Seriously, I was starting to weep when I turned onto the pavement when I saw my dad with his hand out the window..."

The Gordon family now eight class wins and six overalls.

"That was a brutal race!" said Roeseler, who drove the final 747 miles. "Do I look tired. I could go without some dust for a while! Troy did a good job but he broke his Achilles tendon about 4 months ago, and I know he had a hard time driving. I got in at Coco's Corner. I don't know what we were then, maybe 20th on the road. With the dust, traffic and water, it was seriously one of the toughest SCORE Baja 1000s I've ever done. I'm not exaggerating. It was brutal! This was really, really tough."

"I've won 12 overalls, now have 15 class wins and I think I've ridden in about 30 of them. The fog really wasn't too bad. There was a little coming in. I saw the sun coming through and it made the last little part more fun, a little easier. It was mostly the dust and traffic. You can't come through the dust, especially at night. There was zero wind."

"The car was fantastic. I had no flats. It was just gas and go at the pits. Everybody did a great job. You know, Troy and I won this overall the last two years and we did make it on the podium again and we won Class 1. Just to finish is a feat of its own."

"I think Troy may have had one flat tire. But I tell you what, the terrain that we go through, I can't even believe the tires. It's pretty amazing what they go through."

"I had a wave of water come through the windshield and just fill the whole cab with water. The water was deep. And of course, you don't want to get stuck, but you don't want to charge it too hard because you'll suck water into the air cleaner and hydraulic the motor. It's just really nerve racking. You do your homework pre-running and you know the good lines and the bad lines. With the 39" tires on this, you tend to think nothing is a problem, but the water was just deep. It was 8 and 1/2 feet. It was radical! But the car didn't miss a beat."

The race-record 431 starters broke the nearly 30-year old previous mark of 346 starters set back in 1977. The field competed in 28 Pro and 6 Sportsman classes for cars, trucks, motorcycles and ATVs.

While Honda extended its motorcycle win streak, Chevy started a new one, with a Chevy-powered vehicle winning the overall title for the 10th time in the event's history and first since 2003.

The race started for the 32nd time in Ensenada and is finishing for the 17th time in La Paz.